

As my friend and colleague Mr. DEFAZIO, from the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, has documented, the economic recovery package had only 4 percent of its funds dedicated for infrastructure, but it created 25 percent of the jobs. Mr. OBERSTAR, and Subcommittee Chair DEFAZIO, have been working for 3 years on the reauthorization of the biggest infrastructure package that we will look at—the Surface Transportation Act. The evidence is that they are, literally, just weeks away from the opportunity to bring this legislation to the floor.

At the same time, we see the consensus building, at least on the Democratic side of the aisle and with the administration, that it is time to revisit efforts to revitalize the economy, that the original economic recovery package simply wasn't big enough considering the problems that we were facing. There is an opportunity to take unused TARP money, part of the hundreds of billions of dollars that was set aside, to help the financial sector recover after it brought our economy to, literally, the brink of collapse.

Well, we've seen at least that area stabilize. Some of the money is being repaid, and the balance is not likely to be needed for an economic emergency like we saw last year. So we should be able to take a significant portion of that unused TARP money and, rather than sending it to Wall Street, sending it instead to Main Street, perhaps to your street to be able to front-load the reauthorization of the Surface Transportation Act to be able to have 6-year funding certainty.

This is a very important opportunity that we should not lose because, at a time when we are concerned about deficits in the Federal budget, there is a yawning deficit in the highway trust fund which simply is not going to be able to meet the current needs of America's highways and transit projects, let alone its future. At the same time, there is an opportunity for us to improve the Federal balance sheet. There is support for the concepts of having user fees that are available to be able to shore up those trust funds that fund infrastructure.

For instance, the administration has placed in its budget the reimposition of the Superfund tax—a tax on the polluters who created these toxic problems all across America, a tax that expired years ago. The previous folks who ran this place would not allow us even to consider its reenactment. Well, it's in the President's budget, which is one example of where a simple action—having polluters pay—will be able to have the economic activity of cleaning up Superfund sites while we are shoring up the Federal budget.

Madam Speaker, if we move forward with the reauthorization of the Transportation Act, if we deal with water infrastructure, if we beef up our economic recovery efforts, and reenact a Superfund tax, we will have an opportunity to invest in America's future

and to put millions of Americans back to work. Unlike other areas of expenditure, this is truly an investment in America's future, which will generate other economic activities and will help the long-term fiscal health of our Nation while we strengthen our families and our communities.

I hope there is a green light for floor time for the Transportation bill. I hope there is a commitment to front-load the Transportation bill with TARP money and that we can get a Transportation bill passed next month and on its way to the Senate so we can put America back to work.

PUT AMERICA BACK TO WORK AND REBUILD AMERICA'S DECREPIT INFRASTRUCTURE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. DEFAZIO) for 5 minutes.

Mr. DEFAZIO. Madam Speaker, the President brought the jobs summit to a very unfortunate and, unfortunately, ill-informed close in his summary statement.

The President is skeptical about shovel-ready projects. He said the term "shovel-ready." Let's be honest. It doesn't always live up to its billing. Well, if he is talking about other than infrastructure, he is right.

The Department of Energy managed to commit a tiny fraction of the money in the stimulus bill, and that which they have committed has created thousands of jobs. Yeah. Unfortunately, they are jobs in China of making windmills that will be shipped to the United States of America. Not exactly what we had in mind.

Maybe it's the tax cuts all across America. People every week are grateful for their tax cuts. No. Actually, they don't know that they get a minuscule reduction in their withholdings, and that's what is supposed to rebuild our economy. There was seven times as much money for tax cuts as there was for transportation infrastructure.

Now let's examine the President's statement a little further. I think he is very, very ill-advised by a prejudiced group of economic advisers who, for some reason, were frightened by infrastructure at a young age, perhaps. Whatever the reason, they hate it—plain and simple—because the fact is, as the previous gentleman said, 4 percent of the funding, that which was spent and is already committed and is underway in infrastructure, has created 25 percent of the jobs. All of that money will be spent out by next summer. There are hundreds of billions of dollars in other programs that aren't being spent out so well, but the shovel-ready transportation infrastructure projects are going forward.

We had a report last week. There is \$49 billion more in bridge and highway projects. We have 160,000 bridges that need reconstruction across America. That's steel. That's concrete. That's construction jobs. That's engineering

work. There is no long lead time. There is no lengthy environmental review. We are replacing or rebuilding things that are already in place. In addition to that, there are many other road and highway projects of great merit. That can be committed within 120 days—\$49 billion. It could take place next construction season—\$16 billion in intermodal, port and other access issues.

Then perhaps this will get the attention out at the White House: \$20 billion in transit. We are killing people on our transit systems because of the outmoded, decrepit infrastructure we have. There is an \$80 billion backlog. When you begin to fill that backlog, what you can do within a day in some places, like the Chicago Transit Authority, which spent a quarter of \$1 billion in 30 days, which is all the money they got—they spent it in 30 days because they have a decrepit system. They ordered things that create a huge multiplier effect and jobs across the economy—transit vehicles, buses. Then people who make parts for buses have jobs. We have "buy America" provisions so the jobs aren't going to China like the DOE grants are. These are the kinds of investments we need to be making. These things work.

Now, why won't his advisers wake up and tell him the truth?

Most of the jobs, the real jobs—the private-sector jobs—that were created by this last so-called "stimulus," were in transportation infrastructure. The money has been successfully spent and obligated. We can give him those statistics. I defy them to go to any other part of that bill other than the money that kept teachers working and other things that helped the States or the tax cuts where the money has spent out at such a rapid rate.

So it's time to reorient the thinking down there on the economic team at the White House. If we want to put America back to work next year, we need to dedicate more funds for rebuilding our decrepit infrastructure across this country. Get the huge multiplier effect we get with that. We have a total of close to \$80 billion of projects ready to go in 120 days. These aren't just your resurfacing things like we saw last year. These are major projects—bridge replacements and major work on transit systems—that are ready to go, that are shovel-ready to go. No lie there.

I hope some of his advisers are listening, that they'll look at the facts and will send the President a corrective memo on these issues.

HEALTH CARE REFORM IN AMERICA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Kentucky (Mr. YARMUTH) for 5 minutes.

Mr. YARMUTH. Madam Speaker, this weekend, my Senator and constituent, Minority Leader MITCH MCCONNELL, made a statement on the

floor of the Senate that was, quite honestly, pretty remarkable. It was special, not because it was passionately delivered or because it was well-constructed, but because it so perfectly illuminated just how disconnected from reality the Senate's opponents of health care reform are.

Of the legislation pending in Congress, the minority leader said, "I am sure there are people in Kentucky who are for it. I have not met one."

Not one? Needless to say, this Kentuckian, for one, found the statement difficult to swallow, but that's beside the point.

The point is that my senior Senator made the claim despite poll after poll showing that the majority of the American people are for it, including not one but more than 1 million Kentuckians. The minority leader has read the same polls I have. I would venture to say that he has heard from many of the same thousands of Louisvillians from whom I've gotten calls, letters, e-mails, faxes, and visits. Everywhere I go in Louisville—from the VA hospital to community cookouts to the aisles of Kroger—I hear from people with valid perspectives on both sides of the issues, and we were elected to listen to all of them.

Yet my fellow Louisville resident proudly took the floor of the United States Senate this weekend and bragged that he was ignoring his constituents, half of them at least. He denied them as though a desire for reform is some sort of a preexisting condition that entitles him to abdicate his responsibilities to us.

Senator, you don't have to take my word for it, and I won't ask you to go searching through all of your old mail. If you're listening, I'd like to take this opportunity to introduce you to a few of your constituents and mine—yes, your fellow Kentuckians. Then maybe the next time you exert your considerable power to stop something that you know is of vital importance to many of your constituents, you will take time to consider their views as well.

Elizabeth of Louisville wrote, "I am a single mother with two children. I am offered health insurance through my employer, but due to the high cost of this insurance, I do not always have enough money to go to the doctor when I need to. Health insurance companies have had at least two decades to get it together and fix the system they have in place, but they have chosen not to. Please do not place the citizens of this country at the mercy of some of the wealthiest companies in this country."

Bobby of Okolona wrote, "As a veteran and recently unemployed worker, I want to thank you for taking a stand on health care reform. I lost my job and insurance coverage in May of 2008. Do we need health care reform? You bet."

Mary of Louisville wrote, "I am asking you to support health care reform. We need a public option plan. My brother is a 59-year-old diabetic, and is

unable to get health care coverage. He is excluded from any plan."

Alvin of East End wrote, "Please do not let health care reform fail. I am a Registered Nurse. I've worked as a case manager at a local hospital. I have seen private insurance deny patients acute rehab after a stroke; whereas, with Medicare, we could have seen them."

Elizabeth of the East End wrote, "I am behind health care reform 100 percent. I am worried about our young adult children and how they can afford it. I have a child who had cancer. I've told her she needs to have a job that provides health insurance when she graduates. The insurance companies need to provide for those who need it most, not just the ones who are healthy."

□ 0915

Gregg of Louisville wrote, "Today I received my annual premium increase. My new premium has increased 32 percent. This has followed 18 to 25 percent increases in the last 3 years."

Andrea of Shively wrote, "Please vote for the health care bill. I am a heart attack survivor, and I am praying that I can stay with my company to keep my insurance. I will never be able to leave this company now that I have a preexisting condition."

Sandra of Prospect wrote, "I am totally behind President Obama's health care reform. I have insurance now, but was not allowed to have it for 4 years due to a preexisting condition. I lived in utter terror the entire time, fearing I would lose my house if I became sick."

Phyllis of the Highlands wrote, "I think we need health care for more people. For years, I struggled as a single parent to pay for health insurance for my five children, and it frequently cost me more than 30 percent of my income—in addition to copays."

Christian of Crescent Hill wrote, "I know what it is like not to have this basic human right, and I know how much better the quality of my life is now that I do not have to worry about it. I believe that it is shameful that we are the only developed country in the world without a public health system, and I would like to voice my support of the President's plan."

Finally, Matthew G., a 10-year-old boy from Louisville wrote, "My parents spend \$50,000 per year for my brother's autism, and I think it's a national crisis. It's just not fair, and this is a fair country, and everybody, no matter who they are, including my brother, Eric, should be treated equally."

Senator MCCONNELL, these are your constituents, yours and mine, and they are Americans. They are deserving of your attention and not your scorn. Please come with me to Louisville, and I will introduce you to more of the people who support health care reform for America.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Members are reminded to address their remarks to the Chair.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until 10 a.m. today.

Accordingly (at 9 o'clock and 17 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess until 10 a.m.

□ 1000

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Ms. BALDWIN) at 10 a.m.

PRAYER

Rev. Richard Hynes, Office of Evangelism, Archdiocese of Chicago, Chicago, Illinois, offered the following prayer:

Lord God, on this date, Catholics honor Jesus' mother, her own conception, especially today at the Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington, which is dedicated in her honor as our patroness of the United States of America.

God of peace and justice, 68 years ago today, from this Chamber, President Franklin Roosevelt asked Congress for the permission to respond to terror inflicted on our country in Pearl Harbor the previous day.

Sadly, Lord God, terror continues today. Individuals, groups of individuals, and even some nation-states imagine terror, prepare for terror, and conspire for terror. However, the necessity to protect innocent people, the right of communities to live in peace, the expectation that people can live with differences and in harmony remain deep desires for Americans and for many others of goodwill.

Guide our Nation with right judgment and courage. Encourage all who labor for an end to terror. We shall never cease seeking Your inspiration in our endeavors to imagine peace and to work for justice.

Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House her approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Will the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. SESTAK) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.